

Children's Play Advisory Service

Traffic and Children's Play

Children today are safer



The above quote could have been taken from any relevant Government minister in the last 40 or 50 years. It is taken from "Staying Safe: A Consultation Document".

The focuses narrowly on safety at the expense of children's healthy development. The road may be safe but this is only because parents are forced to keep their children indoors. If children aren't playing out then they will not get the healthy exercise and fun which should be part of their development.

The full quotation is:

"Children and young people today are, in many ways, safer than in previous generations and have opportunities that their parents and grandparents would not have dreamed of. Rates of accidents are down, including on the roads."

Traffic and Children's Play – A Consultation

The work for this document was originally commissioned by Play England but it wasn't possible to take it forward at the time – they were going through a period of significant change.

It is now being publishing through the Children's Play Advisory Service. Rather than have further delay it is being published as a consultation document. It is 5 years since its submission. Some of the references will now be out of date but we believe the recommendations are as valid now as they were then.

Responses will be shared with Play England who are also making progress on the issues of children and transport and Street Play.

The original work was commissioned from Andrew Stuck and Rob Wheway. This document was primarily the work of Rob Wheway. Another document of a more technical nature was primarily the work of Andrew Stuck and can be downloaded from his website at <http://www.rethinkingcities.net/>

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Photograph from “*Play Streets in London timeline*” published by Londonplay
<http://www.londonplay.org.uk/file/1333.pdf>

Introduction

Play England asked for a scoping exercise which would inform their work on the development of **safer streets in which children and young people can play** and gather information relevant to NCB’s activity around **safe, affordable and accessible transport systems for children and young people**.

This report details the main findings of traffic and children’s play.

The conclusions and recommendations are at the beginning.

The research which leads to these findings is to be found in a series of Appendices after the main conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions

1. Transport by children (approx 4-16 years old) is overwhelmingly made up of short journeys within their own neighbourhood. Compared to this very local transport journeys to school, organised activities, and other facilities are relatively insignificant. This transport is primarily on foot but also includes bicycles/tricycles, skates, skateboards and other play vehicles. It is therefore different from what is widely regarded as 'transport' (Appendix A).
2. When children can be outdoors in their own neighbourhood 'purposefully in a definite direction' i.e. travel, is their predominant activity being 40% of all observations (Appendix A).
3. 'Children's transport' has no widely accepted body of research or understanding which influences policy makers. Where substantial research has been carried out what constitutes a "journey" is very much an adult's perception i.e. going sufficient distance to require formal arrangements to be made, or parental permissions gained, to a defined destination, rather than the informal journeys requiring no specific arrangements which make up the vast majority of children's journeys (Appendix B).
4. Children's independent mobility has decreased dramatically in the last 40 or 50 years (Appendix C).
5. Surveys based on questionnaires will inevitably underestimate the observed travel of children as the travel is not perceived as a purpose or activity in itself and in any case may well be forgotten e.g. ran home to go to toilet, get money for ice cream van (Appendix D).
6. Whilst outside the scope of this report it is likely that the very local travel by adults is also under researched e.g. the elderly person who can no longer drive a car or walk very far may still make short journeys to a neighbours house.
7. Historically the concern has been to keep children out of the way of traffic rather than the other way round (Appendix E). What is called "Road Safety" assumes that needs of children to use the streets (including side streets) are subservient to the needs of the car driver (Appendix F). This has led to a massive reduction in children's independent mobility. Those involved in "Road Safety" appear unaware of the damage caused to children's health by their lack of freedom to travel round their own neighbourhood.
8. There is significant evidence that keeping animals caged for days weeks or even months leads to both physical and psychological damage. Zoos therefore have sufficient space next to the houses for the animals to move around freely, in the way they want to, without offer of reward. From this understanding alone the rising obesity levels in our children should be easily understood and arguably should have been predicted (Appendix G).

9. There is little understanding by government that it is children's loss of freedom to move around which is contributing to the obesity crisis and that solutions will be found in increasing children's freedom to move around their neighbourhood.
10. There is increasing understanding and a widespread acceptance that there are benefits to the wellbeing of communities for the streetscape to be designed to facilitate community interaction, children's play etc. This can be found in the Manual for Streets, Highway Code, DIY streets etc (Appendices H, I, J).
11. These streetscape modifications offer engineering solutions which are costly and time consuming even when relatively modest solutions are implemented. At the current rate of implementation they will not benefit the majority of children for somewhere between a couple of hundred and a couple of thousand years. This was predicted when 'Home Zones' were first discussed and the slowness of development has proved to be true.
12. There is current applicable legislation for 'Street Playgrounds' (not play streets as is generally thought). Original legislation was introduced in 1938 but amended as recently as 1984. This enables roads to have a change of designation without a requirement for significant engineering modifications (Appendix K).
13. The 'Street Playgrounds' approach appears to have fallen out of favour because its name suggests that the people living in such a street will suffer from children descending on the street 'from miles around'. A local authority officer and councillors will be well aware of the petitions and angry public meetings a playground proposal can provoke. Those involved in children's play also feared that the designation of the streets as 'provision' would lead to a closing down of playgrounds, playing fields etc. The name also does not appear to be consistent with equal opportunities for other pedestrians.
14. Within play organisations there are projects and proposals to encourage temporary street closures or traffic restrictions which build on the Playday 'Our streets too' such as the Londonplay 'Street play' project and the Fair Play for Children 'Pavement Olympics'. These may help to popularise the idea of pedestrians having priority over motorised traffic in residential side roads (Appendix L).
15. Where children are allowed out (because the road is safe) there parent's talk about "keeping an eye out" for each other's children. There is more neighbourliness.

Recommendations

Play England are recommended to adopt the following as its strategy for improving children's transport

- 1) Work to persuade the government to amend the 'Road Traffic Regulations Act' so that the name 'street playgrounds' is changed to 'home streets' (or something similar) on the basis that:
 - a) streets are not playgrounds
 - b) the basic reasoning behind the legislation is still valid
 - c) it gives equal opportunities to all ages of pedestrians
 - d) it will build on the lessons from home zones at insignificant cost
 - e) it will contribute to the healthy living and carbon reduction targets
 - f) it is a minor modification of existing legislation
 - g) it will encourage more neighbourliness
- 2) Persuade the government that the 'National Travel Survey' does not reflect the true state of children's travel opportunities (or lack of) and that it should, at least periodically, include some observational research which gives greater understanding of children's travel needs, or that separate studies should be carried out periodically to build up the body of knowledge about children's transport.
- 3) Work with all those involved in 'Road Safety' and ask that they put their messages in the context of 'Health and Safety' so that their safety messages do not continue to cause children's health to be damaged.
- 4) Ask that the Highway Code includes a section on 'street playgrounds' or whatever new name is adopted.
- 5) Ask that the government require the driving test to include an element where the driver has to drive down a residential road at a very slow speed and explain the reasons for this and what s/he is looking out for.
- 6) Encourage each local authority to develop a strategy of mediation where children's use of the street conflicts with other residents. Staff in the playwork section may be best able to be trained for this.
- 7) Work with health organisations to ensure that children's transport, i.e. walking and cycling, can make a significant contribution to their physical well-being and also reduce levels of obesity and related health problems.
- 8) Keep a watching brief on developments in engineering solutions which improve children's ability to walk/cycle around their own neighbourhood so that good practice is analysed from the perspective of children's needs.
- 9) Work with other organisations such Sustrans and Living Streets in pursuance of the above (Appendix M).

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Child's Play: Facilitating Play on Housing Estates

- "Child's Play: Facilitating play on housing estates" (with Dr Alison Millward) (1997) (reprint 98) pub. Chartered Inst. of Housing & Joseph Rowntree Foundation. From (free) <http://www.irf.org.uk/publications/chilids-play-facilitating-play-housing-estates>

The following extracts demonstrate that transport is both an integral and essential part of children's play. The amount of travel indicated is far higher than is generally realised. It is the only research found that quantifies children's transport.

Children spend approximately 40 per cent of their play time travelling from one place to another. These places may be relatively close to each other (30-100 metres) and although the children tend to spend only a few minutes at them, the journeys between them are important for the children. In one hour we therefore estimate that a child might make five journeys.

If we then take a population of 100 children and assume that only half of them play out and for only one hour after school on school days, this generates 250 journeys per day. As school days account for half the days in a year, this generates approximately 45,000 journeys per annum.

If in the same population only 50 per cent play out for an average of two hours on each holiday and weekend day, this generates a further 90,000 journeys per annum.

Finally, if we assume that in addition to all these journeys, each child is likely to make four journeys each day of the year (to school, the shop, a friend's, or the ice-cream van, and back again) this generates 146,000 journeys.

Added together this gives us 281,000 journeys per 100 children per annum. Now this may prove to be an over-estimate when tested by further research. On the other hand, having witnessed children at play outside on some estates from 9.00am until 10.00pm in the summer holidays, it may prove to a serious under-estimate and the true figure might be nearer 300,000 or even 400,000.

Nonetheless, whether on some estates it is 200,000 or 400,000 journeys per 100 children per annum, these are vast numbers of journeys which are vital for children's freedom to play. They are also journeys which are non-polluting and give healthy exercise.

On the move

It would seem that children visit many parts of both their social and physical environment, but do not necessarily stay in one place for very long. Children would be seen calling at a friend's, going into a play area, cycling round but, when the same area was observed half an hour later, there might still be children in that place but not usually the same children. Where children were observed in one particular place they did not tend to stand or sit still in that place but would break off to greet another child who was going past or to see something else that was happening. Where there was a group talking it would

be quite usual for one or two of the group to be on bicycles and to be cycling round as they were talking.

The most predominant key activity that children were involved in was what we defined as 'going' (Table 5). We found that between 31 per cent and 58 per cent of the observations on every estate were of children who were walking, cycling or occasionally roller skating, purposefully in a definite direction. In addition, 3 per cent to 5 per cent appeared to be on an errand, however, for many observations the destination was uncertain.

Parents frequently asserted that their children had to stay within eyesight of home (46 per cent). Within hearing and shouting distance accounted for a further 9 per cent of mentions, and round the block or within a couple of roads 29 per cent. It was clear from the observations that children were travelling some distance away from home beyond that approved by parents, but then not that much further. Although the majority would appear to travel beyond eyesight, they still remained within one or two roads from home on most of the estates. Whilst children's ranges do increase with age, there still appears to be a strong desire, both for security and convenience, to stay relatively close to the home. Many of the parents with teenage children still expressed strong reservations about their children going far away from the home.

In addition to the above report Rob Wheway has carried out similar observational and consultation research of children's play as part of contracts for the following local authorities and housing trusts. These have been carried out most years up to 2008 and the findings have been broadly consistent with JRF report.

Birmingham	Basingstoke and Deane
Elmbridge	Guildford
Lambeth	Lewes
Oxford	Knightstone Housing
Waltham Forest Housing	
William Sutton Housing	

Prior to the research by Wheway and Wheway/Millward the previous similar research was commissioned by the DoE in 1973.

'Children's Transport' – A Search for Research

Searching for “children’s transport” using Google was not very successful. Using Google again with “children’s transport” but also to include the words “walking” and “cycling” on the assumption that any reasonable information on children’s transport would include those, gave what appeared at first to be more promising results. However, the majority did concern just the journey to and from school.

It is also very obvious that those doing research into children’s transport had a mindset which means that the focus is on journeys to and from facilities or opportunities which are some distance from the children’s own home, whereas the research Wheway has carried out for many Local Authorities and Housing Trusts, shows that the vast majority of children’s journeys are of very short distances, i.e. less than 100m metres. Once this is understood the situation looks completely different.

<http://user.itl.net/~wordcraf/routes.html> from Jersey Pedestrians Association makes good arguments for increased walking and cycling and how local changes could be made

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/schooltravel/localauthorities/schooltravelstrategiesandpla5746?page=21> case study from Department for Transport about journeys to and from a particular school

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/schooltravel/localauthorities/hometoschooltransportforchil5742?page=1> Home School transport for children with special needs

<http://www.travelwise.org.uk/default.asp?p=127> ACT TRAVELWISE Membership is for any organisation or person that is either developing or delivering a Travel Plan. An interesting statement they make is: *“It is actually the parents' responsibility to ensure that children get safely and punctually to school and home again, but other people and agencies can help.”* Yet they make no positive recommendations except as far as those journeys which are made by public transport.

<http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:QWTpWkKtpgJ:www.wyreforest.gov.uk/council/councillors/mem44.htm+walking+cycling+%22children%27s+transport%22&cd=5&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=uk> Wyre Forest District Council. This is a personal statement from a previous Cllr. (R. Wheway); “I have been able to advise the Councillors, officers and members of the public on how and where children and young people play out, what prevents them getting such healthy exercise (leading to obesity) and that government knee-jerk approaches of assuming that they are always a nuisance (British Crime Survey, Asbo's etc) are both unjust and unhelpful. I have also demonstrated that children’s transport (walking, cycling) is more important than transport planners realise which is why they automatically give priority to the car even in residential roads.” This statement is not reflected in any strategy adopted by the Council.

<http://www.hackney.gov.uk/SCRIPTS/texis.exe/webinator/search?query=cy&pr=default&prox=paragraph&rorder=1000&rprox=750&rdfreq=500&rwfreq=500&rlead=500&sufs=0&order=r&cq=&cmd=context&id=4891543ad3> This is from L.B. Hackney and makes the statement “The strategic direction of the authority is to actively promote and facilitate modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport.” It appears however to be primarily about to and from school as far as children are concerned.

http://cpol.edinburgh.gov.uk/getdoc_ext.asp?DocId=109720 From Edinburgh City Council. There are good intentions in relation to children “... to make children's transport between home and school more sustainable”. Again the main focus is on the school journey.

http://www.highlandschools-virtualib.org.uk/school_info/handbooks4/Balnain%20PS.pdf a primary school brochure warning that “*Pupils walking to school - For safety and security purposes NO child should enter the school playground until a member of staff is present.*” The brochure also mentions that there is training for cycling proficiency.

<http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/record/reports/020415b.htm> A statement made to a member of the Northern Ireland Assembly. “*In most areas, young people are unable to cycle to school. There are cycle lanes in some towns, and there is a move towards providing more. However, until full provision is made to enable children to walk or cycle to school, such use of the roads will involve a great risk. On most roads, there is just one lane, which gives priority to cars only, without room for anyone else. Until that is changed, the number of people cycling or walking to school will not increase, despite the health benefits of such activity.*” There is also discussion about “walking buses”.

<http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Portals/0/PDF%20reviews%20and%20summaries/WalkingAndCyclingWEB.pdf> The Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre) is part of the Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. A synthesis of research addressing children's, young people's and parents' views of walking and cycling for transport.

This is an important review of transport as can be seen from some of the quotes below. However, it is obvious from the style of the responses that “journey” is in the minds of those framing the questions based on a perception of a journey being a definite arranged visit to a facility at some distance from the child's home rather than the informal running around and moving about that constitutes the vast majority of children's journeys.

Studies of people's views have several implications for intervention. The most important is the need to reduce the convenience of car travel and *simultaneously* increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in residential areas and around schools. According to the research evidence, this would encourage children, young people and parents to walk and cycle, and to use public spaces more, which would strengthen overall community environments.

Furthermore, this could lead to more opportunities to nurture children's and young people's independence in a safer environment

Other barriers on which to focus intervention development are preferences for cars and the cultural attitudes which make car ownership a status issue; the promotion of walking and cycling as 'cool'; parental concerns about children's safety from both accidents and personal attack; and the factors which influence transport choice within families, particularly expectations about parenting.

The paragraph below does show that the reviewers are at least beginning to realise the complexity of the issue and that those having done research previously have not really grasped the full implications.

Our review noted that none of the intervention studies had tried to change people's views about car culture or parenting, dealt with concerns about safety or used positive messages that children have expressed in the views studies about the convenience or social advantages of walking and cycling.

The benefits of walking and cycling, including giving children and young people opportunities to socialise, do not appear to have been addressed by any evaluated interventions.

Our review was able to add to this by showing that, while traffic is a safety concern, it is more of a concern to younger children. Young women and their parents are more concerned about personal safety in terms of abduction and rape.

Currently, society and the structural environment favour the car and mitigate against children's and young people's independence: fast traffic and the lack of crossing facilities for walkers are a real threat to safety, and there are few facilities for cycling. As a result, there are fewer children and families on the streets, either as pedestrians or as cyclists. This is most likely a strategy on the part of parents to prevent accidents and maintain children's personal safety. Perhaps these parents feel obliged to protect children from danger rather than nurture their independence. Their perception may differ if community was valued above the convenience of cars. Children and young people have lost an independence and maturity that was enjoyed by earlier generations (Adams, 1993; Hillman, 1999).

The following paragraph illustrates a reliance on desk and interview research without looking at the increased levels of traffic on the roads.

It is unclear whether parents' (and children's) concerns about safety would be alleviated by objectively measured improvements in safety. The most recent statistics (1994-1998 and 2004) on child deaths and serious injuries indicate that rates for both child pedestrians and cyclists fell by 44% and 49% respectively (Department for Transport, 2004a), but perceptions of safety do not appear to have improved in this period.

The key implications for interventions that follow from these themes are (a) to reduce the convenience of car travel, and (b) simultaneously to increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in residential areas, and around schools and leisure facilities in order to (c) strengthen community interactions and (d) nurture children's and young people's independence in a safer environment.

The conclusion one reaches is that there is no obvious body of knowledge relating to children's transport which is readily available and being consulted by professionals and the public.

National Travel Survey 2007

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/162469/221412/221531/223955/3227431/NTS2007.pdf>

This demonstrates that children's independent mobility continues to decrease. The findings that 85% of 7-10 year olds were accompanied to school contrasts sharply with the finding in "One False Move ..." (Hillman, Adams, Whitelegg) that in 1971 "80% of 7 and 8 year old children were allowed to go to school without adult supervision". It also contrasts with anecdotal evidence to and the personal memory of Wheway that in the 1950's the vast majority of children from age 5 upwards went to an urban primary school unaccompanied.

The finding that a third of 11-13 year olds went to school accompanied contrasts with the memory of Wheway that in the early 1960's virtually all secondary school pupils went to school unaccompanied.

Children's independence

Whether children are accompanied to school

- According to their parents, 85% of children aged 7-10 years were usually accompanied to school by an adult in 2007. This has risen slightly from 81% in 2003.
- The main reasons cited by parents of children aged 7-10 were traffic danger (59%) and fear of assault or molestation (36%).
- A third (33%) of children aged 11-13 years were usually accompanied to school by an adult in 2007.
- According to their parents, the main reasons why children in this age group were accompanied were convenience (34%), traffic danger (27%) and the school being too far away (27%).

Children crossing roads alone

- In 2007 13% of children aged 7-10 were usually allowed to cross roads alone, according to their parents. This is down from 19% in 2003. Around half (49%) were not allowed to do so, and the remaining 38% were sometimes allowed.
- Of those who were usually or sometimes allowed to cross the road alone, 17% were allowed to cross main roads and the remaining 83 per cent could only cross minor roads.
- Among children aged 11-13, 74% were usually allowed to cross the road alone and only five per cent were not allowed.
- Over three quarters (78%) of those who were usually or sometimes allowed to cross roads alone could cross main roads, with the remaining 22% only allowed to cross minor roads.

National Travel Survey – Technical Report 2007

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/adobepdf/162469/221412/221531/223980/224028/224048/nationaltravelsurveytechnica1820>

The Technical Report does show that attempts were being made to find out the travel of children even when this might only be playing. It appears to have been generally unsuccessful because there is no reference to it in the National Travel Survey itself.

This is not really surprising because given the context the people answering the questionnaire would almost always see travel or transport as a definite journey to a specific location rather than the informal traveling around the neighbourhood which makes up the majority of children's transport.

In Whewey Millward (See Appendix A) whilst the observational research revealed travel to be a very significant activity this was not then reflected in the children's or parent's answers to the questionnaire research. This is almost certainly because the travel is not seen to be an activity of itself merely something which enables an activity and in addition much of it will be quickly forgotten, for instance running home to go to the toilet, get money for the ice cream van, or to have a grazed knee kissed better, will not be remembered as journeys but in observational research will probably be recorded as two journeys each.

On day 7, the child travel record asked whether the respondent spent any time in the street (e.g. playing, talking with friends etc.).

For any young children, a themed **fun pack** (which included stickers, a colouring book and pens) was provided for their amusement whilst adults completed the survey.

The **individual questionnaire** was asked of each household member, including children (although proxy information was collected for under 11s).

In 2005 73% of interviews with children aged under 11 were by proxy.

Each individual in a household was issued with a seven day travel record, in which they were to record details of their travel activity. There are two versions, one for adults (respondents aged 16 and over) and one for children (the Young Person's travel record).

On day 7, the child travel record asked whether the respondent spent any time in the street (e.g. playing, talking with friends etc.)

Road Safety – Some History

There were laws passed by Parliament in 1861, 1865 and 1896 (the latter two being whose concerns included the carrying of the red flag by a person ahead of the vehicle and the speed restriction being 2 miles per hour in the town and 4 miles per hour in the country). In the debates in Hansard there does not appear to be concern for the plight of children who traditionally play on the streets. The concern was much more that these noisy vehicles (because in the early ones they were steam rather than petrol) might frighten the horses. A comment in 1896 by Henry Chaplin, President of the Local Government Board, brought great amusement when he thought “it was even possible that these motor cars might become a rival to light railways”.

In 1861 The Locomotive Bill, Lord Granville did suggest that “in out of the way districts (these vehicles) might frighten a few peasant boys, toll keepers and some other timid animals of that kind.”

The Ministry of Transport held a conference in March 1927 “Street Accidents in Greater London”. On the apparently positive side there was a recommendation:

“That the Authorities concerned should give further consideration to the question of providing adequate space, particularly in congested districts, where children can play without resorting to the streets.”

However, it can be seen that the idea was to prevent children from interfering with the traffic rather than the other way round. This was confirmed in a further discussion:

“Pedestrians, particularly children, should be educated to adapt themselves to modern traffic.

Proposed by – London County Council, Wood Green Urban District Council, Association of London Omnibus Proprietors Limited, Royal Automobile Club, Coroners’ Association, National “Safety First” Association and London Cartage and Haulage Contractors’ Association.

Result – Agreed”

The National “Safety First” Association is of course now known under its more recognisable title Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

A suggestion that “some legislation is necessary to render the cyclist or pedestrian relatively responsible for action “to the public danger” such as is applicable to the motorist” was dropped.

Road Safety – What the ‘Experts’ Promote

Almost all of what is called “Road Safety” assumes that the car has the right to be on the street and children have the duty to avoid the car. Almost all “Road Safety” assumes that children have a duty to avoid damaging cars by letting them crash into them whilst it reinforces the view that car drivers should have an expectation that children must get out of the way

A scheme from DfT gives cartoon stickers and advice to children on how to keep out of the way of cars <http://talesoftheroad.direct.gov.uk/hedgehogs/>

A government site which makes the assumption that children under 6 years old have no right to be on the street yet it forgets that as recently as the 1960’s that most primary school children (5 years old and upwards) walked to school unaccompanied and that even nowadays young children will play out in front of their own house on the pavement where traffic is very slow
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/Roadandtravelsafety/DG_4003049

At a different place on the same site giving advice for 7-11 year olds makes the statement *“At seven years old your child may still be holding your hand as you walk them to school - a few years later your child may be going to school without you. This guide suggests ways your child can be independent while staying safe”*. This forgets that it was usual for children of 8 years old to walk to cubs or similar uniformed organisations unaccompanied by adults and that by this age virtually all children in urban areas would walk to school on their own. In rural areas many would have cycled but some would have been driven
http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Yourchildshealthandsafety/Roadandtravelsafety/DG_4003050

The Second Review of the Government’s Road Safety Strategy (Feb 07) is about reducing deaths with the assumption that this should be primarily achieved by restricting children
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/strategytargetsperformance/2ndreview/screen.pdf>

The DfT Child Road Safety Strategy 2007 is primarily about training children to keep out of the way of cars. It does as a secondary strategy refer to 20mph restrictions however this is primarily to reduce the seriousness of injuries rather than to increase children’s freedom to use the streets
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/child/childroadsafetystrategy2007?page=1#a1000>

At the same site there is some recognition of children’s transport need. However it is partial and only refers to the school journey which is only 2 journeys per day for half the days in the year

106. Around one sixth of child road casualties are recorded as happening on the journey to or from school, so this is an important area to focus on. Child

pedestrian accidents often happen close to home as well as near schools, so work to improve the safety of school journeys needs to focus on the whole route, not just the area around the school.

107. School travel is also receiving much attention because of its links to policies relating to reducing congestion and pollution, by promotion of cycling, walking or using public transport for journeys to and from school. Promotion of cycling and walking, including on school journeys, is also linked to policies to improve children's health. Road safety activities need to be fully integrated into other school travel policies. Care needs to be taken to avoid giving mixed messages regarding travel advice, especially in many rural schools, as it may not always be safer to walk or cycle than to come by car.

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/child/childrdsafetystrategy2007?page=6#a1026>

The Dft "Think" campaign is primarily about teaching children to keep out of the way of traffic

http://www.dft.gov.uk/think/focusareas/children/?whoareyou_id=

Safekids is a website which appears to generate income through advertising. Its focus is on training children to avoid traffic but does make a positive statement on traffic calming whilst assuming that children should not be free to walk to school on their own

On a wider note, you can campaign for traffic calming measures or more well lit crossing points to be implemented in your area. And if your child does walk to school, ask if the school has thought about implementing a walking bus scheme where highly visible volunteer parents escort the children to school each day, doing pick ups along the way much as a real bus does

<http://www.safekids.co.uk/RoadSafetyChildPedestrians.html>

Road Safety week emphasises the need for children to keep out of the way of traffic and urges schools to educate them in this

<http://www.roadsafetyweek.org/?p=193>

The "Roadsafe" awards are won by organisations training children to keep out of the way of traffic

<http://www.roadsafetyawards.com/national/list.aspx?catid=10>

The Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association sees their role primarily as training children to keep out of the way of traffic. Some information can be found on traffic calming but it does not appear to be a significant part of their overall strategy

<http://www.larsoa.org.uk/index.php>

Strategic guidance from RoSPA primarily assumes that children have to be trained to keep out of the way of traffic but does also include advice on engineering solutions and legislation to reduce speeding

http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/strategic_guidance.pdf

The RoSPA guide for elected members stresses the need to educate children to keep out of the way of cars but does also mention encouraging walking and cycling to school

<http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/info/electedmembersguide.pdf>

The RoSPA songs are designed to inculcate children with the idea that they should be subservient to the car

<http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/songs/4-7d.pdf>

Child Accident Prevention Trust (capt) has its road safety focus on training children to keep out of the way of traffic

<http://www.capt.org.uk/parents/safety-advice/road-safety.html>

Local Authorities

Research at a number of Local Authority sites has revealed a fairly standard approach to road safety. It would be unfair to single out any particular one but most if not all primarily focus on educating children to keep out of the way of the car as might be expected as their officers will reflect the views of Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association (see above).

Health and Children's Transport

The government fails to understand the amount of healthy exercise children will get from just playing out. The whole idea that when children play out not only will the play involve healthy exercise but that the children will make lots of small journeys that are healthy exercise and non-polluting transport.

In "Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: a cross-government strategy for England" it makes one brief reference to the money from the Big Lottery money for play areas but no references to children's transport in their neighbourhood except for the school journey. It also fails to understand that the new play areas are unlikely to benefit more than about 1% of children and so will be of limited benefit to the health of children as a whole.

"Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives: Consumer Insight Summary" suffers from a failure to understand or acknowledge children's play and the journeys children make whilst at play. Whilst it refers to "Child's Play" (Whewey Millward) it misrepresents the findings in that it refers to the reductions in children's ranges (not the main findings) and ignores the recommendations about how playing out can be encouraged. It blames parents rather than understanding the changes in car traffic which have understandably increased parental fears and led them to restricting their children's outdoor travel. It therefore leads to recommendations which rely on children being accompanied by parents when at play – an unrealistic expectation. It uses no other research findings about children's play.

These failures are particularly worrying as the "insights" [sic] gained influenced the "Change4 life" campaign

The "Change4life" campaign

<http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/default.aspx>

appears to have received no input from anyone with an understanding of how children play. Rather than looking at how the environment can be changed to enable children to play out it effectively blames parents for not taking their children out more (yet parents supervise their children more nowadays) and ignores children's play (which is rarely supervised but takes place near home).

Those who have any understanding of children's play (a much bigger activity than school) have been virtually ignored in the preparation of these strategies

This site also contains reference to Play4Life as follows:

Dance4Life, Play4Life, Swim4Life, and Walk4Life sub-brand logos,

PepsiCo will support Play4Life by funding advertising to promote the benefits of active play and use the wealth of sporting talent contracted to them.

It appears that this is a promotional activity encouraging commercial organisations to refer to sporting and other activities in which children can take part on their promotional material.

Children's play does encourage the development of the imagination and there is no doubt someone whose imagination is sufficient to work out how Play4Life will benefit children's play.

In "Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures" a positive statement is made but no recommendations as to how it is to be achieved except by facility provision.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_094400

4.18 Wider environmental factors also have a huge impact upon children's and young people's ability to stay healthy. For example, walking or cycling to school or play areas is a key way to improve children's health and to reduce obesity, at the same time reducing pollution, and increasing road safety and community cohesion. And outdoor play in green spaces benefits children psychologically and physically. Even small amounts of green space are shown to have qualities that facilitate relaxation and recovery from mental fatigue and stress, particularly for those with symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Manual for Streets

Whilst there is much to be welcomed within MfS it is deficient as regards children's play, this despite the fact that the street has been the primary place in which children play for countless generations. It is also the case that for the vast majority of children their play opportunities will be dependant on being able to play on the street and walk/cycle along it to nearby friends and spaces.

This deficiency can be seen:

- None of the steering group, advisers or responding consultees appears to have significant knowledge of children's transport.
- There is no reference to "children" or "play" in the index
- The only reference to "children playing" is in a picture
- There is only one reference to "children's play"
6.3.21 Places for pedestrians may need to serve a variety of purposes, including movement in groups, children's play and other activities (Fig. 6.8).

The evidence document on which MfS is based has 2 passing references to "children's play" one stating that the public do not understand how public areas can encourage it and one from some Swedish research. There is a mention of a play area in an example. It does however mention research that people felt their streets were not safe for children playing and that in DfT research (2005) about attitudes to streetscapes "children playing" came a close second priority after car parking for residents. Research on Home Zones found that people had become more considerate to children playing. Children playing in other research appeared not to be a high like or dislike.

NB it uses "streets" specifically for residential and "roads" specifically for distributive. Play England will need to use these definitions

MfS makes many positive statements which are helpful

1.1.4 Streets should not be designed just to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles. It is important that designers place a high priority on meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, so that growth in these modes of travel is encouraged (Fig. 1.1).

1.1.6 MfS discourages the building of streets that are:

- primarily designed to meet the needs of motor traffic;
- bland and unattractive;
- unsafe and unwelcoming to pedestrians and cyclists;

1.6.1 The main changes in the approach to street design that MfS recommends are as follows:

- applying a user hierarchy to the design process with pedestrians at the top;
- emphasising a collaborative approach to the delivery of streets;

- recognising the importance of the community function of streets as spaces for social interaction;
- promoting an inclusive environment that recognises the needs of people of all ages and abilities;
- reflecting and supporting pedestrian desire lines in networks and detailed designs;

It does however dismiss generally and illustrates with a picture

A poor-quality space with a layout where pedestrians and vehicles are segregated. It has not been a success and the area is now undergoing regeneration.

This conflicts with observational research by Whewey Millward where segregated space can work well for children where it meets the 2 criteria in “Child’s Play”

1. “See and be seen” – they tend to play where they can see and be seen by a parent or other trusted adult.
2. “Where it’s at” – they tend to play where there is a high probability that they will meet friends and other members of the community.

More positively it states

3.5.4 Typical objectives might be:

- enabling local children to walk and cycle unaccompanied from all parts of a development to a school, local park or open space;

A suggested but “not to be rigidly applied” User Hierarchy is helpful

Table 3.2: User hierarchy

Consider first

Pedestrians

Cyclists

Public transport users

Specialist service vehicles (e.g. emergency services, waste, etc.)

Consider last Other motor traffic

In 3.7 it discusses “Auditing” and includes safety audits. There is nothing within this section that gives an impression that the particular and very different needs of children are understood. There is nothing in the safety auditing which appears to understand that the overall “health” of needs to be considered as “safety” measures taken in isolation can be detrimental to the health of children

Table 4.1 The hierarchies of provision for pedestrians and cyclists

For both it recommends

Consider first Traffic volume reduction Traffic volume reduction

In 4.4 it tends to come out against cul de sacs, though it recognises that they may be required. This is contrary to repeated research by Rob Whewey where short cul de sacs have been found to be beneficial for children’s play as they have no through traffic and good sightlines from neighbours. It does however give good advice but any through connections for pedestrians and cyclists should be well overlooked with active frontages.

It makes the statement in 4.5.5

layouts that use excessive or gratuitous curves should be avoided, as they are less efficient and make access for pedestrians and cyclists more difficult.

This is not necessarily so as severe bend can act a good traffic calming which enables children to walk and talk on the streets

In 5.8 it makes the assumption that children will be a nuisance and also what they need is “facilities” rather than a right to use the street

balancing the need to provide facilities for young children and teenagers overlooked by housing, with the detrimental effects of noise and nuisance that may result.

It discusses road speed and states

6.3.19 Streets with high traffic speeds can make pedestrians feel unsafe. Designers should seek to control vehicle speeds to below 20 mph in residential areas so that pedestrian activity is not displaced.

A small piece of research by Rob Whewey for the Neighbourhood Road Safety Initiative appeared to show that 20mph was far too fast for parents to feel that it was safe to let their children play out. Whilst the research is not large enough to be conclusive it appeared to be consistent with his other research. The 20mph is primarily concerned with injury reduction rather than safety for children playing out as is emphasized elsewhere in MfS.

In 7.2.8 it suggests shared surfaces where traffic is calm can

- create an environment in which pedestrians can walk, or stop and chat, without feeling intimidated by motor traffic;

MfS refers to Home Zones supportively its recommendations do however suffer from the same shortcomings. There are approximately 63,000 roads in the London A-Z of which approximately 50,000 are likely to be primarily residential. If 100 per year are turned into Home Zones it will take 500 years to improve the roads, if however they are only changed at 10 per year it will take 5,000 years. Both the recommendations of MfS and Home Zones will have a no beneficial effect for the vast majority of today’s children or those of many future generations

A small survey to users of MfS has only 2 responses to “child”. One about children crying at night and another noting that children’s independent mobility has decreased.

The Highway Code

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Highwaycode/DG_070202

The Highway Code gives somewhat mixed messages yet does contain some positive statements relevant to children's transport. The restrictions that are recommended for children not playing out and always using the Green Cross Code are not relevant to the every day experience of children where they can play out. Neither is it consistent with the new approaches in such places as Home Zones.

On the other hand it does recommend that motorists do need to be aware that children might be expected to be playing on side roads, eg Home Zones.

Young children should not be out alone on the pavement or road (see Rule 7). When taking children out, keep between them and the traffic and hold their hands firmly. Strap very young children into push-chairs or use reins. When pushing a young child in a buggy, do not push the buggy into the road when checking to see if it is clear to cross, particularly from between parked vehicles.

The Green Cross Code

The advice given below on crossing the road is for all pedestrians. Children should be taught the Code and should not be allowed out alone until they can understand and use it properly. The age when they can do this is different for each child. Many children cannot judge how fast vehicles are going or how far away they are. Children learn by example, so parents and carers should always use the Code in full when out with their children. They are responsible for deciding at what age children can use it safely by themselves.

- A. First find a safe place to cross and where there is space to reach the pavement on the other side. Where there is a crossing nearby, use it. It is safer to cross using a subway, a footbridge, an island, a zebra, pelican, toucan or puffin crossing, or where there is a crossing point controlled by a police officer, a school crossing patrol or a traffic warden. Otherwise choose a place where you can see clearly in all directions. Try to avoid crossing between parked cars (see Rule 14), on a blind bend, or close to the brow of a hill. Move to a space where drivers and riders can see you clearly. Do not cross the road diagonally.
- B. Stop just before you get to the kerb, where you can see if anything is coming. Do not get too close to the traffic. If there's no pavement, keep back from the edge of the road but make sure you can still see approaching traffic.

- C. Look all around for traffic and listen. Traffic could come from any direction. Listen as well, because you can sometimes hear traffic before you see it.
- D. If traffic is coming, let it pass. Look all around again and listen. Do not cross until there is a safe gap in the traffic and you are certain that there is plenty of time. Remember, even if traffic is a long way off, it may be approaching very quickly.
- E. When it is safe, go straight across the road – do not run. Keep looking and listening for traffic while you cross, in case there is any traffic you did not see, or in case other traffic appears suddenly. Look out for cyclists and motorcyclists traveling between lanes of traffic. Do not walk diagonally across the road.

Advice to drivers includes

Drive carefully and slowly when

- in crowded shopping streets, Home Zones and Quiet Lanes or residential areas

It also gives advice on speed reduction

(a pedestrian) could step into the road in front of you. At 40 mph (64 km/h) your vehicle will probably kill any pedestrians it hits. At 20 mph (32 km/h) there is only a 1 in 20 chance of the pedestrian being killed. So kill your speed.

Home Zones and Quiet Lanes. These are places where people could be using the whole of the road for a range of activities such as children playing or for a community event. You should drive slowly and carefully and be prepared to stop to allow people extra time to make space for you to pass them in safety.

It also gives an example of a Home zone sign

The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/em2006/uksiem_20062082_en.pdf

Home Zones are a welcome step forward for the Government. However, as can be seen from the advice below Home Zones can only be implemented once the traffic has been slowed down considerably. This means that Home Zones are almost always dependent on significant and expensive engineering modifications.

Home Zones aim to improve the quality of life in residential roads by making them places for people, instead of just being thoroughfares for vehicles. The key elements to a Home Zone are: community involvement to encourage a change in user behaviour; and for the road to be designed in such a way as to allow it to be used for a range of activities and to encourage very slow vehicle speeds (usually involving sensitively designed traffic calming).

The Department considers that only roads which are predominantly residential and either have very low traffic speeds already (well below 20 mph), or have measures applied to bring speeds down to these levels, are appropriate for consideration for designation as a Home Zone. Home Zones can be designed as part of new residential developments, or retrofitted into existing residential areas by redesigning the streets. A Home Zone may include some other non-residential premises, for example local shops or schools, but the majority of premises should be residential.

Within a designated Home Zone, traffic flows should be low, no more than about 100 motor vehicles in the afternoon peak hour is recommended, with little or no through traffic. Traffic management measures may be used to constrain motorised vehicle flows. Vehicle speeds should be kept to low levels appropriate to the mix of activities being undertaken by different users in the Home Zone. The intention should be to ensure that, for example, children can play games or that people can stand and talk in safety, even though they may need to move occasionally to allow vehicles to pass. Home Zone entry and exit signs remind drivers that they are entering or leaving a Home Zone, a place where they may expect people to be using the whole of the road space for a range of activities including children playing.

Street Playgrounds

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/RevisedStatutes/Acts/ukpga/1984/cukpga_19840027_en_1

Street Playgrounds (not Play Streets as is generally assumed to be the case) were first introduced in 1938. They were, however, amended and included in the Road Traffic Regulations Act of 1984.

They are also mentioned in other pieces of legislation which, for instance, refer to the level of fines.

It would appear that Street Playgrounds can be designated without any need to install major engineering works prior to the designation being made.

Street playgrounds

F129 Power to prohibit traffic on roads to be used as playgrounds

- 1) For the purpose of enabling a road for which they are the traffic authority to be used as a playground for children, a local traffic authority may make an order prohibiting or restricting the use of the road by vehicles, or by vehicles of any specified class, either generally or on particular days or during particular hours.

The prohibition or restriction may be subject to such exceptions and conditions as to occasional use or otherwise as may be specified in the order.

- 2) An order under this section shall make provision for permitting reasonable access to premises situated on or adjacent to the road.
- 3) A person who uses a vehicle or causes or permits a vehicle to be used, in contravention of an order in force under this section shall be guilty of an offence.

31 Byelaws with respect to roads used as playgrounds

- 1) Where an order is or has been made [F1 under section 29 of this Act, the local traffic authority may] make byelaws authorising the use of the road as a playground for children and making provision—
 - (a) with respect to the admission of children to the road when used as a playground;
 - (b) with respect to the safety of children so using the road and their protection from injury by vehicles using the road for access to premises situated on or adjacent to it or otherwise; and
 - (c) generally with respect to the proper management of the road when used as a playground for children.
- 2) Byelaws under this section shall be subject to confirmation [F2 by the Secretary of State

Play Streets – Developments and History

London Play's Lottery funded Street Play project began in May 2008 and over the next three years will facilitate 100 one-off road closures across London.

The Street Play project will give children a rare opportunity to play out on their streets. It seeks to provide London's children - through compromise with the motorist and support from local authorities - with a safe, free to access, play opportunity right outside their door. Each event will be unique, but will broadly be similar to traditional Royal jubilee street parties but with children's play very much at the heart of them.

London Play have a very helpful background document "Play Streets in London". It details the development of Play Streets in London and New York and notes that, whereas in New York the number of Play Streets has increased, in England they have decreased.

<http://www.londonplay.org.uk/file/1333.pdf>

This is a welcome development and may beg the question why the play world has not pressed for Play Streets over the years. The recollections of Wheway from the mid-1970's when working as a regional officer for NPFA were that Play Streets were not promoted for two reasons.

Firstly it was a bit of a political hot potato because if people asked for a Play Street some residents from that street would assume that children from all over the area would descend on their street and cause mayhem. We have seen with the introduction of new playgrounds or playgrounds in new housing estates that one or two grumpy grown-ups can easily whip up fear, build up petitions and mean that the playgrounds are not installed or closed down completely.

Secondly there was a strong feeling that if Play Streets were seen as "provision" then Local Authorities would stop providing play areas, adventure playgrounds and possibly even green space with the argument that there was already sufficient Play Streets.

The first of these arguments is, I believe, valid from our experience with new playgrounds. The street is also important for adults as well for if they are able to walk and talk in their street then they get increasing feelings of neighbourliness and social capital is likely to increase. It seems to me wrong to suggest that the streets are primarily for children. We should be stating that they are primarily for the whole community.

If the streets were designated in another way, eg "safe streets", "home roads", "neighbourly streets", or something similar, then this would overcome the second problem because they would clearly not be "play provision".

A quick look at the photographs from the London Play site shows that the restrictions on cars in Play Streets did alter from place to place. Some said “all mechanically propelled vehicles prohibited” – this appears to even include pedal cycles – whereas others seem to allow cars for access.

Politically there would seem to be two approaches:

- a) To say that there is existing legislation that really needs relatively minor amendment. This runs the risk that people who don't like children would say that renaming it was just Government “spin” and that if their area becomes a Play Street then it would be plagued by children from miles around.
- b) New legislation may be more difficult in terms of Government time and getting it through but it would not run the problem of being seen as “Play Streets”.

The big advantage of Play Streets legislation was that it did not require any great expense. The law was there and it had to be obeyed and all that was necessary was for signs to be placed at the end of the road. If we are to enable children to walk around their own neighbourhood then a change in the law with signs erected would be a much quicker solution. There would be the problem that people might ignore it so there would have to be some quite heavy policing certainly in the early days. However, as has been seen with seatbelt and no-smoking legislation it is possible to make significant changes in people's behaviour through the application of the law.

Sustrans

Sustrans have recognised that Home Zones are very expensive and cannot be replicated with the urgency that is needed. They have therefore set up a DIY streets project which aims to provide lower cost solutions.

They have 11 sites in hand at the moment but they are still being undertaken and so there is not yet any long term evaluation of their success.

Organisations

The National Heart Forum has its heart in the right place. It does appear to understand that environmental change is needed to increase walking and cycling. It does not appear to understand children's transport but may well be glad of information.

http://www.heartforum.org.uk/Policy_physact_walkcycpubspace.aspx?print=true

Living Streets is an organisation who would probably welcome advice on children's transport. They do not have any specialist knowledge on children's play but are known to be sympathetic.

<http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/>

The Children's Society appear to be supportive of children's play however they appear to be overly influenced by a survey which talked about parental fears about letting their children play out. Whilst this is a genuine response to the questions a greater knowledge of children's play would lead to an understanding that fears and reality are not the same and that where children can play out then the fears are lower.

<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/>

Green-space are the charity side of the Institute for Parks and Green-space practitioners. They may well be interested but may tend to want information relating to spaces rather than the environment as a whole.

<http://www.green-space.org.uk/>

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has begun to understand that obesity is an environmental issue rather than a disease requiring treatment and therapy.

<http://www.nice.org.uk/>

Sustrans have tended to concentrate on adult journeys however their 'DIY streets' does seem to understand the changes that make streets suitable for children and they also seem to understand that this needs to be done at low cost so it is replicable unlike Home Zones.

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/default.asp?sID=1165320622046>

StreetGames appears to have a focus on games in the street

StreetGames is the only national charity dedicated to developing sport in disadvantaged communities. Our goal is to make sport accessible to everyone regardless of their income and social circumstances. We champion 'doorstep sport', by which we mean positive activities delivered close to home, at the right time, at the right place and in the right style

However all its activities are based off the street and it contains the following statement from a volunteer

“I was heading down a bad path and had been in trouble with the police quite a bit. Because I wanted to work with children in the future I knew I’d have to pull my act together and volunteering has helped me do that. I love it and for the first time in ages actually enjoy getting up in the morning. **It has definitely steered me away from the streets** and towards a more positive future.”

Children's Transport – The Time Reality – A Calculation

The focus on the journey to school is very much an adult perception, probably based on the fact that adults main journey each day is to and from work. However for children the reality of their transport is completely different. For a start children only go to school for approximately half the days in the year. The other half is predominately play days.

The calculation is that children have approximately 105 weekend days per year and 13 weeks holiday which gives $13 \times 5 = 65$ days. Added together this gives 175 days as play days out of a total of 365. Even when children are at school they can spend a number of hours (dependent on the time of the year) playing out.

Road Closures for Events

F116A Prohibition or restriction on roads in connection with certain events

This is a further extract from the Road Traffic Regulations Act and appears to be the legislation that London Play is using to close streets for one day.

- 1) In this section “relevant event” means any sporting event, social event or entertainment which is held on a road.
- 2) If the traffic authority for a road are satisfied that traffic on the road should be restricted or prohibited for the purpose of—
 - (a) facilitating the holding of a relevant event,
 - (b) enabling members of the public to watch a relevant event, or
 - (c) reducing the disruption to traffic likely to be caused by a relevant event,

the authority may by order restrict or prohibit temporarily the use of that road, or any part of it, by vehicles or vehicles of any class or by pedestrians, to such extent and subject to such conditions or exceptions as they may consider necessary or expedient.

- 3) Before making an order under this section the authority shall satisfy themselves that it is not reasonably practicable for the event to be held otherwise than on a road.

But no such order shall be made with respect to any road which would have the effect of preventing at any time access for pedestrians to any premises situated on or adjacent to the road, or to any other premises accessible for pedestrians from, and only from, the road.

Miscellaneous Information

Some research carried out for the DCFS done with little understanding of children's play

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RW082.pdf>

A review of simplified streetscape schemes with references to children's play

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/review-of-simplified-streetscape-schemes.pdf>

UNPUBLISHED PROJECT REPORT UPR SE/199/05 FACTORS INFLUENCING PEDESTRIAN SAFETY: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Prepared by A Martin (TRL Limited)

Refers to playing in the street

6.4.6 Play Streets

- A residential street closed to all traffic during specific hours, to permit a supervised program of recreational activities to take place in the roadway. Originally employed in the United States. Zegeer (1991) has written about a series of interview studies which were conducted at 20 sites in Philadelphia and New York in 1975. The play streets were found to be effective in eliminating traffic and parking and 96% of the residents believed that it reduced the number of children hit by cars. Zegeer (1991) also reports on a collision study carried out in Philadelphia, where there was a significant reduction in pedestrian collisions involving children in areas around the play streets, despite an increase in child pedestrian collisions, city-wide.

Royal National Institute for the Blind

This is why we are demanding the adoption of inclusive design (ID) principles. According to the Scottish Executive, "Inclusive design creates environments that can be used by everyone, regardless of age, gender or disability."

ID is not a set of standards but rather a philosophy or approach. ID can be applied to anything that involves a design process and therefore can be far reaching. Local authorities through planning departments and building control and standards departments have control over most changes that occur in the built environment.

This can range from new housing to the layout of road junctions.

Fair Play for Children

Fair Play for Children, with the support of CAPT, has been promoting the idea of pavement Olympics. This would be where traffic is restricted to residential side roads for 2 to 4 weeks during the summer holiday. During this period children would, without external organisation, play out and probably undertake activities which are vaguely sporting such as games of tag and hide-and-seek.

Parents and other adults would be encouraged to “walk a mile” each evening by walking round the block or other route which can nowadays can simply be measured by using GIS. The final Saturday of the closure would be when everyone who wants to be involved will walk a measured distance on their own roads. The distances would then be totalled up and added to the score of all other streets undertaking the activity.

This would be a similar way to the amounts of money are totted up for Children in Need. It would be hoped the media would join in this and that targets should be set such as so many circumlocutions of the globe or going to the moon and back.